

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name ATHLONEother names/site number DHR File No. 05-119

2. Location

street & number Jct. SR 151 and SR 674N/A ☐ not for publicationcity, town Amherst☒ vicinitystate Virginia

code

VAcounty Amherstcode 009zip code 24521

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>87</u>	<u>4</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>81</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>8</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 80.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Debra C. Miller
Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Date

6 July 1992

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling
Secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling
Secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
roof METAL: Tin
other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Athlone is a thirty-acre farm located on a high ridge near the town of Amherst, Virginia. The main dwelling on the tract is an antebellum frame structure that reached its present form after several building campaigns. Section I of Athlone, probably built before 1815, is a four-bay, 1-1/2-story, gable-roofed frame unit with single-pile, central-passage-plan. About 1856 Section II was erected at the east gable end of the original unit. This is a two-bay, two-story, gable-roofed structure with double-pile, side-passage plan. Subsequent additions--a kitchen and a single-room slave cabin that was moved from elsewhere on the farm--enlarged the house further. Featuring Federal and Greek Revival interior detailing, the house exhibits a high degree of integrity on both the exterior and interior.

There are, in addition to the dwelling, seven unusually well-preserved nineteenth-century domestic and agricultural buildings at Athlone. Arrayed in the rear yard of the house, these contributing buildings include a brick kitchen, a fieldstone ash house, two hay barns, a hay and animal barn, a corncrib, and a smokehouse. In addition, there are four noncontributing resources at Athlone dating to the 1940s: three barns, one of which is equipped with animal stalls, and a tool shed.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The main house at Athlone is a six-bay, simple braced-frame dwelling with a gable roof; it was built in two phases and expanded with later additions. Section I of Athlone, completed before 1815, is a 1-1/2-story structure with raised brick foundation; it features a single-pile, central-passage plan. Local tradition holds that this earliest portion of the house was itself built in two phases, one about 1735 and the second about 1780. Physical evidence suggests, however, that this section of the house was built at one time. The brick foundation is continuous and consists of five-course American bond. The roof is a common rafter system with a false plate. The rafters and joists in this section are fastened together with machine-cut nails; this and other architectural evidence is consistent with building techniques used in the early nineteenth century. The timber frame of the 1 1/2-story section, originally covered with weatherboards that are still attached with machine-cut nails, was encased with aluminum siding in the 1960s.

The gable roof of this initial section of Athlone has overhanging eaves with a flush soffit. The roof, now covered with standing-seam metal, has a 48-degree pitch. Photographs taken in the 1890s show the roof covered with wood shingles. Five gable-roofed dormers, three on the rear

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1800-1900

Significant Dates

1856

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The main house at Athlone farm, which is located in Amherst County, was constructed in two distinct phases, the first before 1815 and the second about 1856. The earlier structure, a frame, story-and-a-half, single-pile, central-passage-plan house in the Federal style, represents a type of dwelling often constructed following the initial settlement of upper Piedmont Virginia. Its plan and style reflected the Tidewater roots of many of the early settlers of the region. The second phase, which was built in the Greek Revival style, is a frame, two-story, double-pile, side-passage-plan addition. The house illustrates the relative prosperity enjoyed by many Piedmont farmers in the mid-nineteenth century, and together with its outbuildings and farm structures illustrates the progressive stages of development in Amherst County farmsteads in the second half of the nineteenth century.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

Athlone is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Constructed in two phases--before 1815 and about 1856--the house contains elements of both the Federal and the Greek Revival styles. It is an unusual example of an early Amherst County farmhouse that reflects the changes in the tastes and circumstances of its owners throughout the nineteenth century. As an evolved structure, it retains a high degree of integrity. The period of significance is considered to be ca. 1800-1900 as the earliest section of the main house was probably built after 1800, and because the latest contributing outbuildings were constructed before 1900.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Athlone, a dwelling constructed in two distinct phases, is located in Amherst County. The first owner of the tract upon which the house stands was the Reverend Robert Rose, a Anglican minister, who came to Virginia from Scotland in 1724. Rose acquired a 23,700-acre grant of land along the Tye River in 1741 and settled there with his family in 1748. After his death on 30 June 1751 his lands were divided among his widow and four youngest sons: Henry, Hugh, Patrick, and Charles. Patrick Rose settled on the part of the larger tract that became Athlone.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Amherst County. Deed Books. Amherst County Courthouse. Amherst, Va.

Auditor of Public Accounts. Land Tax Books. Amherst County. 1820-1857. Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Va. (VSL&A).

Auditor of Public Accounts. Personal Property Tax Books. Amherst County. 1815. VSL&A.

Fall, Ralph E. *The Diary of Robert Rose*. Verona, Va.: Augusta-Heritage Press, Inc., 1985.

Percy, Alfred. *The Amherst County Story*. Madison Heights, Va.: Percy Press, 1961.

United States Census. Virginia. Agriculture Schedules. Amherst County. 1850. Reel 229. VSL&A.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (38 CFR 87)
has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 31.5 acres

UTM References

A 17 675020 41780
Zone Easting Northing

C 17 675045 417340

E: 17 674890 4171855

B 17 675115 417380
Zone Easting Northing

D 17 674515 417830

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 17/675020/4171780, B 17/675115/4171380, C 17/675045/4171340, D 17/674515/4171830, and E 17/674890/4171855.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the house and all the associated resources that have historically been a part of the property.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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organization Center for Historic Preservation

street & number Mary Washington College

city or town Fredericksburg

date October 30, 1991

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state Virginia zip code 22401-5358

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and two on the front, light the attic. Each dormer contains a six-over-six, double-hung-sash window. There is an exterior, single-shouldered, brick chimney (laid in six- and five-course American bond) in the west gable end of this earliest portion of the house. The base of this stack, which is not centered on the gable end, has been covered with concrete and its upper courses have been recently repointed. A common bond brick chimney, the upper courses of which have been recently repointed, was inserted east of the central passage and is not centered on the ridge of the roof.

A gable-roofed, wooden entry porch supported by brick piers shelters a door that leads into the central passage of Section I. Added to the house during what appears to have been a thorough remodeling prior to the Civil War, the porch is supported by four robust, free-standing, square Doric columns and two applied Doric pilasters that flank the door. A six-over-six, double-hung-sash window with shutters pierces the pedimented gable of the porch. Historic 1890s photographs show a wooden railing with square balusters on either side of the wood steps that lead up to the porch. This railing has been recently reconstructed to its original appearance. Chippendale-style railings, also shown clearly in the late-nineteenth-century photographs, extend from the columns to the pilasters. Sidelights and a five-light transom surround the exterior door.

All of the windows in this section of the house are six-over-nine, double-hung-sash examples that, on the north elevation, are flanked by modern louvered shutters.

The basement under Section I has a dirt floor and is lit by small unglazed windows with horizontal wooden bars. The basement is accessible through a bulkhead entrance in the southern wall. There is a fireplace with a baking oven at the west end of the basement. A dumb waiter, now gone, once led from the basement to the first floor. The hand-hewn summer beams in this section of the house are nine by eleven inches in size. The sills, also hand-hewn, are pegged and lapped together. The ceiling joists are three by eleven inches in size. A single-run enclosed staircase rises to the first floor along the east wall and an enclosed storage space exists under the stairs.

The first-floor plan of Section I of Athlone contains a central passage flanked by two rooms. The eastern room is twenty-one by seventeen feet. The floor in this room, and throughout the first floor, consists of three-and-a-half-inch pine boards. The walls are plastered above and below a two inch chair rail. A nine-inch baseboard encircles the room, except along the west wall where the baseboard is five inches in height. The brick fireplace on the west end of the room retains its Federal-style wooden mantel. The ceiling is plastered. The east window on the south wall of this room was made into a doorway in the 1970s and leads to an enclosed porch. A bathroom was added to the northeast corner of this section of the house in the 1970s and a doorway was inserted through the east gable end in the 1840s to provide access to the dwelling's second phase.

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The narrow seven-by-seventeen-foot central passage contains an enclosed staircase that ascends to the second floor along the east wall. The room to the west of the passage is fifteen by seventeen feet in size and contains woodwork that, while still relatively plain, is higher in quality than that in the eastern room and indicates that the western room was the more formal of the two rooms. The beaded baseboard is seven inches wide, and the chair rail is one and a quarter inches wide. Below the chair rail is a dado consisting of three-and-one-quarter-inch wide horizontal boards. A closet was added to the northeast corner of this room.

The upper floor of Section I of Athlone is divided into two rooms and a central passage. The walls and ceilings of both rooms are finished with plaster that is laid over split lathing nailed to studs and rafters with machine-cut nails. On this level, the flooring is of random width pine boards, ranging from three and a half to six inches side, and is fastened with fully mature cut nails. In the northeast corner of the eastern room a repair patch in the floor that measures nearly three feet by six feet may indicate the location of an earlier stair. A doorway leads from the eastern room into the second floor of Section II. The fireplace in this room is identical to the one in the room below.

The space over the entry porch is floored with random width pine boards. The walls and ceilings are unfinished. The rafters are, like the adjoining gable roof of phase I, circular sawn and fastened with machine cut nails.

Section II of Athlone was constructed in around 1856, judging from the county land tax books. It is a two-story, double-pile, side-hall-plan frame addition, that is larger than the house's first section. The wood frame of this second section of the house sits on a raised basement consisting of common-bond brick and fieldstone construction that is still covered with weatherboards, but, like Section I, they were covered in the 1960s with aluminum siding. The roof has a 35-degree pitch and is covered with standing-seam metal, although photographs of the 1890s show it covered with wooden shingles. A wooden entry porch with a hipped roof shelters a doorway that leads into the side hall. The porch sits on brick piers and has wooden steps. The porch roof is supported by paired, square Tuscan columns with chamfered edges and two Tuscan pilasters, one on either side of the doorway. The porch railing is plain with square balusters.

The two-bay facade of Section II is dominated by large tripartite windows that are loosely Greek Revival in style. A simple entablature is situated above each window and the doorway that leads into the side hall. The style and form of the doorway is identical to the doorway that leads into the center passage of Section I. The classical elements that appear on the door and window openings are apparently the result of renovations that followed completion of Athlone's second phase. A set of French doors were inserted through the east gable end between the chimney stacks in the 1930s.

The basement of Section II is sixteen by thirty-six feet in size, and has a dirt floor. A fireplace is located in this basement chamber and a bulkhead entrance, now covered by twentieth-century

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additions, once provided access to the basement at the southwest corner. Most of the joists for first floor are logs that have been leveled on one side to accommodate floor boards. Like the few circular-sawn joists that are interspersed among the log joists, they are joined to the sills with mortise-and-tenon joints.

The first floor of Section II has a side-hall plan. The flooring in the relatively narrow hall consists of five-inch-wide pine boards, the beaded baseboards are ten inches high, and the simple chair rail is three and a half inches wide. This side hall was shortened by five feet when a kitchen was added in the twentieth century. The walls and ceiling are plastered. An open-string, single-run, staircase is on the west wall of the hall. The oval railing ends at a simply turned newel post, each tread has two square balusters with scrolled brackets below. All the door frames in the hall, except the closet door, bear Greek Revival trim.

The front parlor, seventeen by eighteen feet, has no chair rail. The fireplace in this parlor retains a relatively plain mantel with flat pilasters and a simple' molded entablature. The rear parlor, identical in size to its neighbor, has a thin one-inch high chair rail and a dado that consists of three-inch boards. Apparently a later alteration, these boards are attached to the wall studs with wire nails. The wall above the chair rail is plastered. The mantel and fireplace are treated in an identical manner to those in the front parlor.

The second floor of Section II contains a hall, a bathroom, and three bedrooms. The architraves around the window and door openings on the second floor are reeded with sunburst corner blocks. A bathroom was added to the north end of the side hall. Its fiberboard dropped ceiling tiles cover the original plaster ceiling. The fireplace in the northern bed chamber is surrounded by a wooden mantel decorated with reeded pilasters, large sunbursts set in frieze blocks, a beaded and reeded architrave, and a molded shelf. A closet has been added along the west wall of this room. The southeast bedroom contains identical decorative elements; however its mantel contains carved chalices above reeded pilasters. The Federal style of this woodwork in an otherwise Greek Revival house suggests that it may have been trim recycled from elsewhere.

A number of additions were appended to the southern elevation of Athlone. Part of the southern porch was enclosed and converted into a small kitchen, pantry and mud room in 1953. The pantry was later converted to a bathroom. The east end of the porch was extended and enclosed in 1970. Two original porch posts are still remain in the middle of this room.

Just before World War II a kitchen was added along the southern side of Section II. This addition incorporated five feet of the side hall. Electricity, heat, and telephone service were installed at Athlone at about that time.

What is purported to have been a slave dwelling was added to the southern side of the kitchen about 1960. The simple braced-frame construction with a gable roof sits on a common-bond brick foundation. The roof is covered with standing seam metal. A single-room,

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fifteen-by-thirteen feet, has a loft above reached by an open string staircase along the east wall. The walls are covered with matchstick paneling.

The current owners of Athlone began restoration in the spring of 1991.

Seven contributing domestic and agricultural outbuildings at Athlone include: a kitchen, an ash house, three hay barns, a corncrib, and a smokehouse. The one-story, thirty-by-fifteen foot, brick kitchen has a gable roof that is covered with standing-seam metal. The walls of the building are laid in ten-course American bond and contain, on the southern gable end, the ghost of an exterior, gable-end chimney. The kitchen, now one room, was two rooms, a brick foundation for the partition wall is still present. A massive hand-hewn mantel is visible on the south wall.

The small, seven-by-nine-foot, fieldstone ash house has a gable roof. Clay was used as mortar, some repointing was done after the collapse of the southern wall. The roof of this structure is covered with standing seam metal. An opening on the north elevation allowed fireplace ashes to be deposited inside. Family tradition holds that the ash house was used to collect ashes for soap making and to save live coals for starting new fires.

A late-nineteenth-century, sixteen-by-twenty-four-foot, two-story hay barn of simple braced-frame construction sits on a fieldstone foundation, located west of the house. All framing members are circular sawn, clad with weatherboard, and the gable roof is covered with standing-seam metal. There is a hay joist above a second-story opening on the south elevation. A later, one-and-a-half-story, shed-roofed addition wraps around the west and north elevations. The addition is constructed of re-used hand hewn posts, logs, and circular-sawn framing and sits on a fieldstone foundation. Wire nails are used throughout the construction of the addition.

A second late-nineteenth-century hay barn is a one-and-a-half-story structure designed for hay storage above with animal stalls below. The simple braced-frame building has a gable roof, sits on a fieldstone foundation, and is clad with vertical boards. The overall dimensions of the building are twenty-four by sixteen feet.

The third late-nineteenth-century hay barn is eleven feet square. This story-and-a-half, simple braced-frame, gable-roofed building sits on a fieldstone foundation, is clad with weatherboards, and has a standing-seam metal roof. Later shed-roofed additions were made to the north and south elevations of this barn.

A late-nineteenth-century frame smokehouse is five by eight feet in size, has a gable roof, and currently sits on a concrete foundation. Built at about the same time, the twenty-by-twenty-four foot frame corncrib sits on a concrete foundation.

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Three additional hay barns built at Athlone in the 1940s are noncontributing. They are all of simple braced-frame construction on concrete foundations. The gable roofs are covered with standing-seam metal. Framing members are circular sawn and held together with wire nails. A noncontributing frame tool shed was built in the 1940s according to family tradition. This gable-roofed structure sits on what appears to be an early fieldstone foundation. Photographs from the late 1890s show a shed where the tool shed now stands.

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On 24 November 1814 Patrick Rose and his wife Mary sold 957 acres of land to Thomas Aldridge; the land was described as being located on both sides of the main road from Rose's Mill, on Piney River, to New Glasgow.² According to the 1815 personal property tax book for Amherst County, Aldridge owned two houses in the country with a total value of \$2,000. One of the dwellings had an icehouse.³ This suggests that the earliest part of Athlone--the story-and-a-half dwelling--may have been constructed between 1751 and 1815. Stylistically, the more recent date is the more likely.

In 1820 the buildings on the 957-acre tract were valued at \$1,000 in the Amherst County land tax book. In 1821-1822 Aldridge constructed on the property a new building or buildings worth \$500. Aldridge sold the property in 1823, together with several other landholdings (including one tract that had \$400 worth of buildings on it), to William Morgan, of Lynchburg. Morgan consolidated his various tracts into one large one amounting to 2.368 acres.⁴

Morgan held the land until he moved to Georgia in 1835-1836, but made no taxable improvements on it. On 20 September 1835 he sold the Athlone tract (slightly more than 392 acres) to Richard North. According to the land tax book for 1837, the boundaries of the Athlone tract had been drawn to include all \$1,900 worth of buildings.⁵

On 3 November 1840 North sold the Athlone tract to Albert G. Chewning. By that time the property had been reassessed and the value of the buildings had declined to \$1,000. Chewning sold the property to William H. Diggs, of Nelson County, in 1844. Diggs transferred it in 1849 to Samuel M. Garland, who acted as trustee for N. (Nicey) H. Chewning. In 1850 the property was reassessed once more, and the assessor reduced the value of the buildings to \$500. In 1857, however, the value of the buildings increased to \$1,500, indicating new construction. It may have been at this time that the two-story addition to the earlier house was built.⁶

Albert Chewning appears to have continued farming the place although it was in the hands of a trustee. Perhaps he had overextended his resources when he purchased the farm in 1840 and lived on the tract as a tenant. He was listed in the 1850 agricultural census of Amherst County and appeared relatively prosperous. His crops included Indian corn (700 bushels) and wheat (500 bushels), and he raised 150 swine, 30 sheep, 6 milk cows, 4 working oxen, 7 other cattle, and 10 horses.⁷

Nacey W. Chewning sold Athlone to her son, Pymbus or Pyrrus Chewning, in 1867, and in 1871 he sold it to John J. Dupuy. On 29 November 1893 Dupuy sold the farm to Thomas Howell. An Englishman, Howell came to the United States with his father at the age of seventeen. After working in America for seventeen years he returned to England and married his childhood

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sweetheart. In the early 1890s Howell retired as a merchant tailor to become a "gentleman farmer" and moved, with his family from Newark, New Jersey, to Athlone. Before moving into the house, Howell made extensive repairs the dwelling and the outbuildings, all of which had deteriorated during the last years of the Dupuy occupancy. He constructed additional barns and sheds to support a wide range of agricultural activities. Howell grew tobacco, corn, oats, and wheat, and raised a variety of livestock. Howell's brother documented many of the changes in photographs.⁸

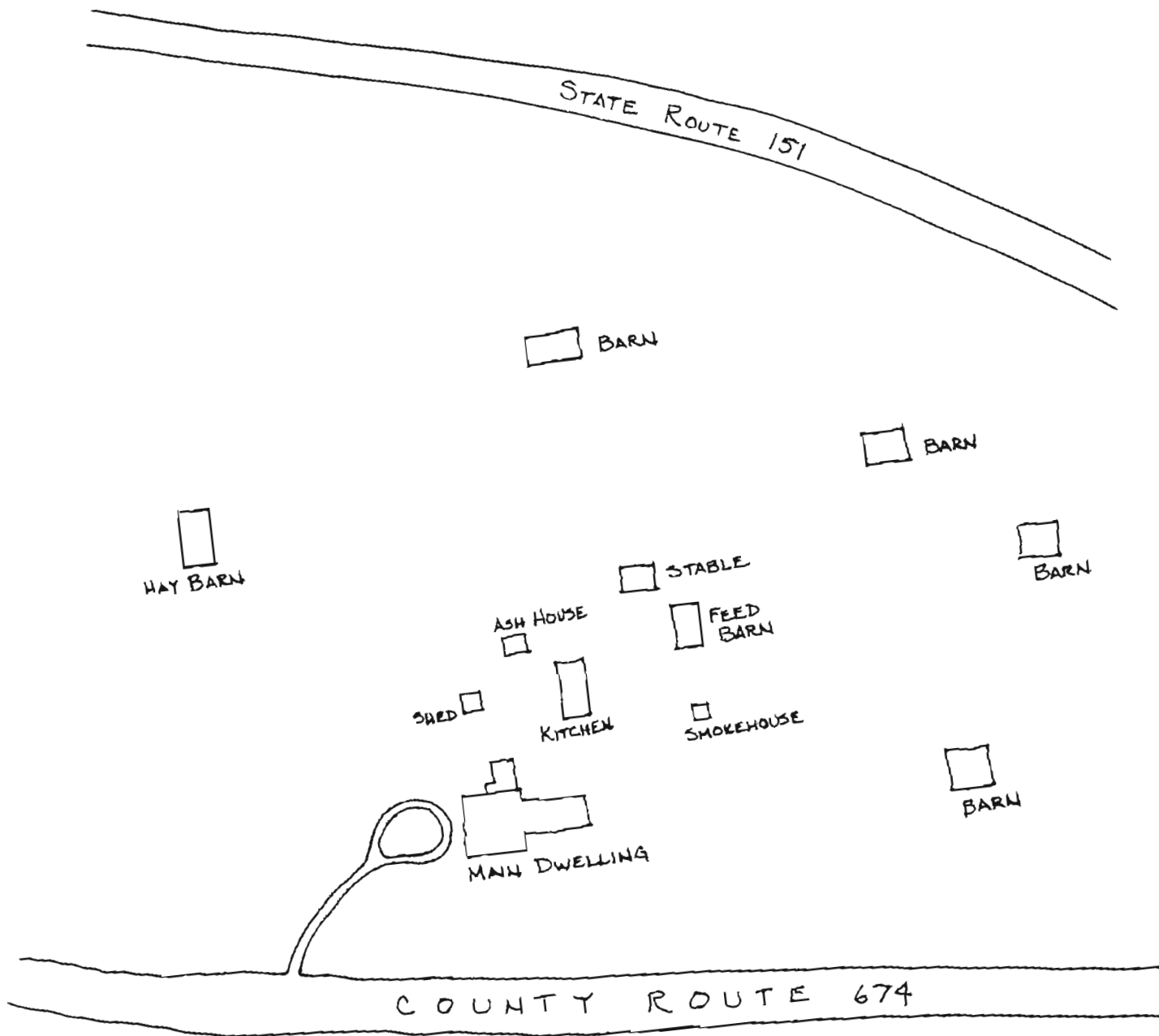
When Howell died on 5 December 1921 he left Athlone to his widow Alice and their children: Mary, Robert, Amy, Roger, John V., Jessie H. Massey, and Celia H. Jones. John V. Howell soon began buying his siblings' share and became, by 1940, the sole owner of Athlone. Louise Howell, the wife of John V. Howell, inherited the property when he died. She in turn bequeathed the farm to her daughter Alice Howell Powell.⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Ralph E. Fall, *The Diary of Robert Rose* (Verona, Va.: Augusta-Heritage Press, Inc., 1985), xv, 183, 338.
2. Amherst County, Deed Book M, 1814, p. 619, Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, Va.
3. Auditor of Public Accounts, Personal Property Tax Books, Amherst County, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Va. (VSL&A).
4. Auditor of Public Accounts, Land Tax Books, Amherst County, 1820-1824, (VSL&A); Amherst County, Deed Book P, pp. 375-376, Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, Va.
5. Amherst County, Deed Book V, 1835, p. 418, Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, Va.; Auditor of Public Accounts, Land Tax Books, Amherst County, 1835-1837, (VSL&A).
6. Amherst County, Deed Book X, 1840, p. 437, Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, Va.; Auditor of Public Accounts, Land Tax Books, Amherst County, 1840-1857, (VSL&A).
7. United States Census, Virginia, Agriculture Schedules, Amherst County, 1850, Reel 229, VSL&A.
8. Amherst County, Deed Book HH, 1871, pp. 204-205, Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, Va.; *ibid.*, Deed Book UU, 1893, p. 410.
9. *Ibid.*, Deed Book 84, 1893, p. 545; *ibid.*, Deed Book 104, 1922 & 1924, pp. 432-434; *ibid.*, Deed Book 120, 1940, pp. 519-520.

ATHLONE

AMHERST, VIRGINIA



OK 1/27 4-12-98